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ON THE COVER

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Photo and production by Anna Min and Diane Napper

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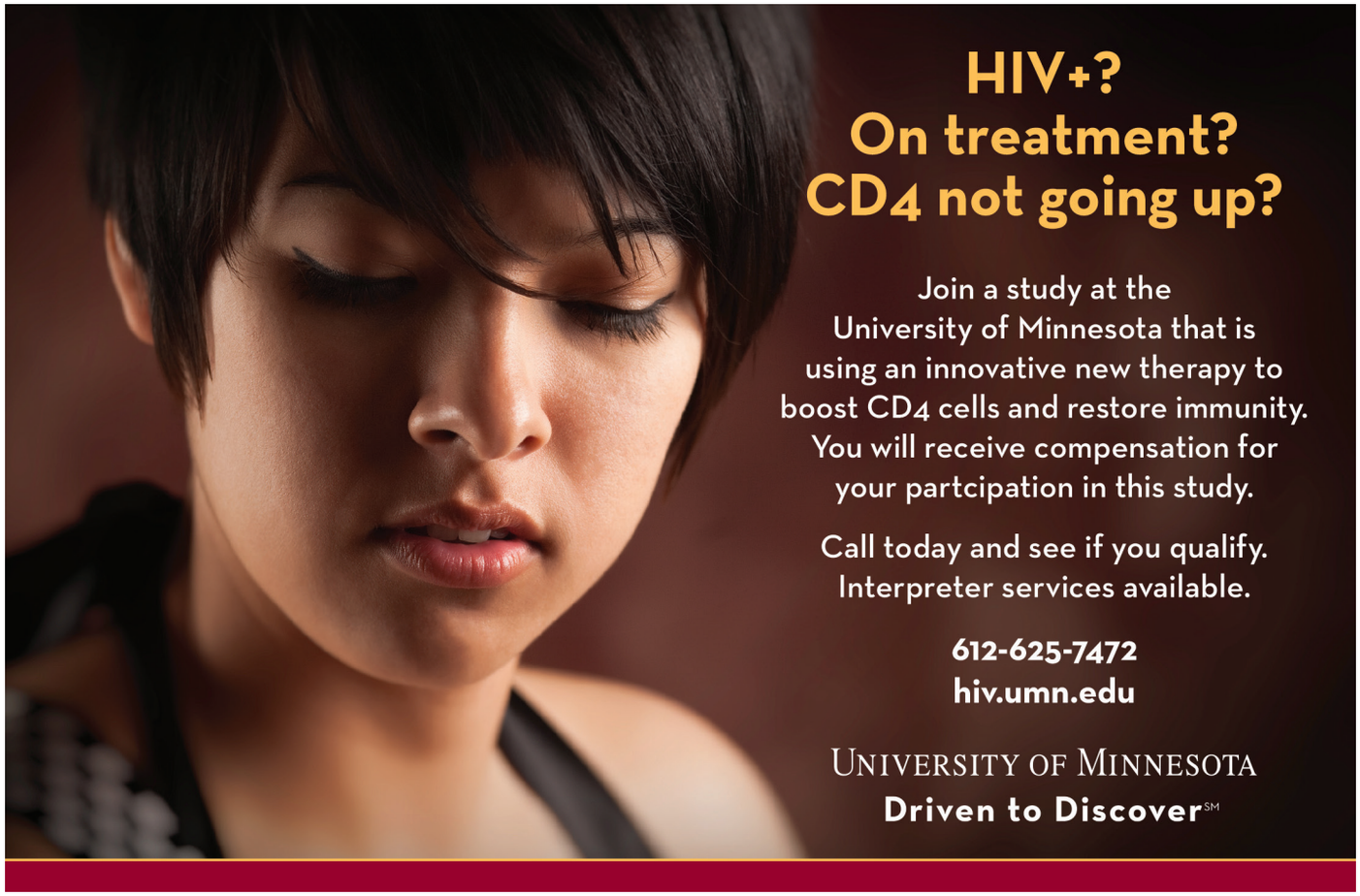
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Fancy Feasts

This Restaurant Edition hits some high points for this community, shining a light on what the data shows to be quite popular with our readership: nonprofits, new restaurants, and the arts. That we can hit a great food-oriented fundraising event for people living with HIV/AIDS, some new places to find fantastic food, and our dynamic drag queen brunches in one issue is sheer delight for me. When I travel to other areas and markets to become acquainted with some of what their GLBTA communities embrace and champion, I can usually find the fundraisers and cuisine, but I've got to say that we've got an amazing drag scene here in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Whether we're talking drag queens or kings, the options we have for that segment of art and entertainment are enviable. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.



On the topic of food, I'd also like to ask for your input and assistance. Lavender Media is producing videos of recipes now. I know I'm not alone in that I tend to go catatonic as I'm scrolling through Facebook on my phone and I see a video showing food prep in my feed...they're enchanting, they make my mouth water, and they help me with meal planning, no lie. So, as we move into producing these, please go check out what we've already done (my disembodied hands are very recognizable, I'm told) on Facebook in our videos section, on our website under the Recipes & Cooking tab, or on Vimeo when you search for Lavender Magazine. Then, if you have a recipe that you'd like to see featured or produced, send it to me at andy@lavendermagazine.com with a little blurb about what it means to you and we'll choose a few to produce as videos and publish in the Pride Issue. Please put "Pride Recipe" in the subject line. I can't wait to see what you've got!

With you and with thanks,
Andy ■

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Seeing a Man (Lady) About a Horse

I've only twice caused a commotion in a bathroom, well, once in a bathroom, another time stopped by a policeman at the door. Both times I was at the bathroom North Carolina would have deemed appropriate. In the more than a decade that I've used restrooms, gyms, and saunas of the "other" persuasion, there's been nary a peep. I now feel qualified to make a few observations and comments about loos.

First of all, in the average facility (not a black room in Barcelona) folks of all sexes and genders are eager to relieve themselves and get back to whatever they were doing; shopping at Macy's, having dinner with a friend, getting back to their seat after intermission at *The Book of Mormon*.

Should a trans woman ever approach your wife in a bathroom, it will be to ask what shade of lipstick she's applying, or to compliment her on her blouse. As a recent meme making the Facebook rounds has pointed out, more senators have been arrested for hanky-panky in airport restrooms than have transgender people.

Moreover, what is there to see in a ladies or gents room? Ladies will be invisible within locked cubicles, while gents will be lined up along the porcelain, backs to you. Nothing to see since a good many trans men will be using a locked cubicle along with other trans men and the not infrequent pee-shy gents.

Why would a trans woman lurk in a bathroom to attack another woman? If a trans woman wants to meet other women, there are more pleasant places to frequent. If scaremongers are warning against men dressing up in women's clothes to attack women in women's bathrooms, they're describing a criminal. A man cross-dressing to commit a crime is called "disguised" not "transgender."

But *Lavender* readers know this already. The Great Bathroom Scare, in my opinion, is a sexual buzzword, a diversion to inflame their followers and to keep their minds off actual societal problems that need addressing. The boy used to cry, "Wolf!" Now, he yells, "Trans!" Recognizing the problem is one thing, combatting it in the face of insane, cruel, discriminatory, and debasing laws is another. Sanctions by entities with enough economic muscle to hurt is one way. It worked for the moment in Georgia. ■

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Bullets Over Broadway. Photo by Matthew Murphy

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Cantus Spring Concert: Would You Harbor Me. Photo by Curtis Johnson

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Tenor Zachary Colby shares, "This concert is especially meaningful because it allows audiences to engage in issues they think they won't encounter but really, these challenges can happen to anyone, even you and me. Music can be a great equalizer that helps us feel compassion and empathy for those we may feel we know nothing about."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Barbra Streisand looms as a cult figure for gay men. In Jonathan Tolins's play, a man is hired to look after the stuff in her Malibu basement, which is actually a shopping mall. Sasha Andreev plays the solo role of Alex More, a struggling actor in Los Angeles. He shares, "I didn't know much about Barbra before I became involved with *Buyer and Cellar*, aside from a couple of movies my stepmom made me watch as a kid as a part of my Jewish heritage. After prepping for this show however, I must admit that I'm a convert. Her body of work is astounding, and having to 'be' her in the show, I understand where she comes from when she's accused of being difficult. (She just really cares.) The play taps into the mystery of Barbra's life, as a public and private figure. It reveres it, scrutinizes it and pokes a little fun. There are many hidden gems referencing famous lines from movies and songs, and plenty of humor and sarcasm to satisfy both the Barbra lovers and the cynics. Hopefully you'll walk away feeling like it was ultimately a Barbra celebration."



Buyer and Cellar. Photo by Eliesa Johnson

JULIUS CAESAR IN REPERTORY WITH MACBETH

Through May 1
Minneapolis Theatre Garage, 711 W. Franklin Ave.
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www.classicalactorsensemble.org

In this 400th Anniversary of William Shakespeare's death and in our own time of political turbulence, we should reflect on those wise voices of the distant past who remind us that the patterns that understandably get under our skin are, by and large, nothing new. In Shakespeare's own time of political regime change, the conspiratorial murder of a beloved Roman general, Julius Caesar, spoke to its own later Elizabethan time, and it speaks to our time as well.

Randall J. Funk is directing a Shakespeare play that has broad appeal and always has. If you think you are not a Shakespeare person, then check out this production. Funk shares, "In an election year, we're asking ourselves not just what candidate we'll vote for, but what kind of society we wish to create and to live in. It's the kind of meditation that perfectly accompanies a play like *Julius Caesar*. Are we willing to sacrifice our freedoms for the assurance of a strong and protective government? Can we uphold certain ideals in a world of practical politics? With political candidates using the rhetoric of fear and anger, it's impossible not to hear echoes of it in Antony's funeral oratory. In contrasting ideals and practicalities, freedom and security, emotion and intellect, *Julius Ceasar* is a political meditation not only for its time but also for ours."

Two of the Twin Cities' most charismatic young actors star. Brutus, actually the protagonist of Julius Caesar, is played by Neal Beckman and Mark Antony by Daniel Joeck. The play runs in repertory with Shakespeare's grisly *Macbeth* directed by Joseph Papke, with Michael Kelley and Hannah Steblay who was so terrific in the title role of CAE's *The Duchess of Malfi* in 2014.

LASSO OF TRUTH

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The nuclear family norm seems to be hardwired into our species, or at least a big portion of our species. Polygamy often is deemed as oppressive toward women and toward younger men who lack the resources that older men have to sustain a lifestyle supporting several wives. However, in recent years, polyamorous relationships have existed and have been possible much more successfully than we realize, though few polyamory practitioners profess their way of living because of fierce social prejudice. That said, there is more discussion nowadays about polyamory and Carson Kreitzer's play, *Lasso of Truth*, sheds light on it.

Leah Cooper, who is directing it for Walking Shadow Theatre Company and Workhaus Collective relates: "*Lasso of Truth* is based on the real life story of William Moulton Marston, the creator of the *Wonder Woman* comics and the lie detector machine, his wife Elizabeth, and their lover, Olive. All three lived together in a happy consensual polyamorous relationship throughout the '30s and '40s until his death in 1947. They had four children together, two by each woman, and the two women lived together, raising the children, for the rest of their lives until Olive's death at 80 years old. In the play we see this relationship develop and evolve as they explore an open-minded approach to love and sensuality, as well as bondage, dominance, and submission. Both women were the inspiration for the Wonder Woman character and Olive wore bracelets much like Wonder Woman.

A dream team plays *Lasso*'s trio: Annie Enneking, Meghan Kreidler, and Stephen Yoakam. As progressive as the Twin Cities theater scene is, polyamory is a subject that hasn't been explored on local stages. Harold Kahm's *The Crowded Bed* is perhaps the best known. ■


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Christopher Wayne and Mike Tyler. Photo courtesy of The Naked Magicians.

Now You See It: 'The Naked Magic Show' Reveals All

Good magicians don't need sleeves, but great magicians don't need pants.

Or so says Brisbane magician Christopher Wayne, one half of The Naked Magicians. Wayne, along with his Naked Magician counterpart, Mike Tyler, will be equipped with a top hat but not much else when they stop at Minneapolis' Pantages Theatre during their American tour.

Of course, naked magic wasn't always part of Wayne's career path. In fact, he was a pastor at a Christian church in Australia (although he now identifies as Agnostic), and it was actually there that he rediscovered magic as an adult. "The reason I decided to be a magician full time was because I honestly couldn't think of a good reason to not pursue my childhood dream," he says. "I figured, 'What would be the worst thing that could happen if I just tried?'"

As a fan of all things magic, when Wayne sees a good magician perform, he's enthralled. "One night I was at an event and they had booked a magician (it was Mike) and he was one of the best performers I had seen live," Wayne remembers. "I asked him to show me a trick, and he ended up stealing my watch without me knowing! I asked him on a 'bro date' and we had so much in common, we have been best mates since."

The two enjoyed successful careers doing regular magic until the male stripping movie *Magic Mike* was released. They discussed how people kept making *Magic Mike* jokes to them ("How big is your wand?", "Can you make your clothes disappear?") and then they realized…in the history of magic, nobody had ever made a naughty magic show. It was such a simple idea in its core, but Wayne says it has changed their lives. Abracadabra, a show was born, complete with birthday suit.

According to Wayne, there is nothing more vulnerable than being naked on stage; it's the ultimate trust exercise. "No way was I always this comfortable with my body!" Wayne admits. "I had to lose about 55 pounds (I used an online converter to figure out what pounds were) to get in to shape for this show. We were both magic geeks first and foremost, so we had to make sure our bodies were in prime condition, and we both had to get used to being naked in front of people. Two years on however, I can honestly say that the best part of my day is standing naked in front of a thousand people while they are having the time of their lives."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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And of course, when you are naked on stage, there is always space for things to go wrong. "Our worst injury came when we were doing a photo shoot in Australia," Wayne says. "We were recreating our now famous poster shot, and Mike had to throw a fireball into the air for the photo for some additional 'flair.' The fireball landed right on my penis and gave my job and my hobby quite a burn. The lesson: always keep your penis away from open flames."

Wayne promises that audiences have never seen anything like *The Naked Magic Show*, and they promise to deliver what the poster says. "We step up to the plate and deliver what is the naughtiest and funniest magic show that you will ever see, and we guarantee that by the end of it you will have seen *everything*," Wayne says. "Honestly, by the end of the show people have tears streaming down their faces from laughter, and the ultimate shock-and-awe expression on their faces from a final act that has to be seen to be believed."

Wayne describes the finale as magical, rude, shocking, and hilarious, guaranteeing that you will walk away from it in shock and disbelief. "Magically" speaking, the show also features a trick that involves every single audience member — where the magic happens completely in your hands. People always tell the magicians that they can't believe they got to make magic happen from their own seats.

Since the show began a couple years ago, Wayne says it has grown and evolved, saying it was "really good" at best. But he and Tyler kept working on the show, listening to audience feedback, and spending every spare minute to make parts of the show move faster, to get more audience involvement, to create bigger "Wow!" moments, and to get as many laughs as possible.

"We wanted this show to be unlike anything else on the planet, and we worked on it day and night," Wayne says. "Two years later, I can honestly say that this is one of the funniest, entertaining, and most unique shows anyone will ever see; which is why we sell out everywhere in the world that we go. I'm really proud of that, and I love that audiences enjoy it as much as we do."

But beyond the magic, Wayne is also a strong ally for the community. As a straight male, he doesn't have to be so outspoken about GLBT issues, but he and Tyler are very active supporters of the GLBT community in Australia, something that Wayne says was important to them before they were ever naked magicians.

"There are a few political parties and religious groups [in Australia] that are really outspoken about their opposition to marriage equality and to educating our youth about LGBT issues," he says. "There is something inside of me that is heartbroken about the fact that in my country, gay people don't have the same rights as me. Because of my profile as an entertainer I have been given a platform and a voice, and I choose to use that voice to stand up for LGBT rights, marriage equality, and, importantly, to let young people who may be struggling with sexual identity know that they are loved, valued, and cared about as much as any other person."

The former Christian pastor who cut ties with his former life and beliefs, primarily due to irrevocable differences between the church and his personal stance on gay rights, said that he loves the diversity in the audiences he sees, citing both ladies' night out as well as a large number of GLBT members of the audience. Whatever your identity, Wayne promises you will have a good time.

"You will never see a naughtier or funnier show than *The Naked Magic Show*, and we can't wait to show you our magic wands," he says, with a wink. "Oh, and one more thing: We're not naked the whole time. It's like a first date. We kind of make you work for it." ■

THE NAKED MAGIC SHOW
April 28, 8:00 p.m.
Pantages Theatre
www.hennepintheatretrust.org
Must be 18+ to enter.



Christopher Wayne. Photo courtesy of The Naked Magicians

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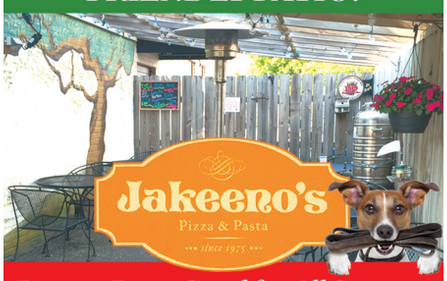
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DINING OUT FOR LIFE

BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR

It's that time of year again: Dining Out For Life, an annual fundraising event involving the generous participation of volunteers, corporate sponsors, and restaurants. You'll see KARE11 personalities Sven Sundgaard and Rena Sarigianopoulos, in addition to hundreds of volunteers, wearing red aprons at your favorite restaurants that are generously donating portions of their proceeds to benefit The Aliveness Project.

Dining Out For Life is now produced in 60 cities throughout the United States and Canada. Across North America, more than $4 million dollars a year is raised to support the missions of 60 outstanding HIV/AIDS service organizations. This year 200 participating restaurants in the Twin Cities, Duluth, and Mankato have agreed to donate a portion of their proceeds to The Aliveness Project on April 28. Read the highlighted choices of hotspots and then plan your day to "Dine Out, Do Good" by checking out the full list of participating restaurants and the percentage of proceeds they'll be donating at www.diningoutforlife.com/minneapolis.

LYN65 Kitchen & Bar — 35%

There's a restaurant in a strip mall in Richfield that's guaranteed to change your image of restaurants in strip malls in Richfield. Tucked away just south of Highway 62, LYN65 is a secret garden of a restaurant, perfect for a date night or fun feast with friends. Especially if you love food. The entrées are solid, but I recommend smallplating your way across the menu. If you skip the bologna sandwich, we're no longer friends. Trust me. It'll win you bonus points with friends and paramours alike. As will the burger and the chicken wings. And pizzas. I could go on. Just go.

www.lyn65.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

LYN65 Kitchen & Bar



Photo by Hubert Bonnet

2016
DINING OUT
FOR LIFE
PICKS

Zen Box Izakaya — 35%

Everybody knows their way around a sushi menu by now, but if you're looking to step up your Japanese bar food and ramen game, take a trip to Zen Box Izakaya and explore a whole new menu of deliciously adventurous treats. From the crisp, doughy goodness of octopus-stuffed tako yaki to the crunch-festooned fried chicken kara age, Zen Box's menu will have you planning an outright trip to the land of the rising sun in no time. If you miss visiting on Dining Out for Life, pop in prior to your next trip to the Guthrie.
www.zenboxizakaya.com

Chin Dian Cafe — 35%

Some nights you feel like Chinese food, other nights Indian. You may not realize it yet, but from now on you're about to crave both. At the same time. Enter Chin Dian Cafe. My outlook on takeout life was changed a couple weeks back after my first few bites of Madras Chicken and veggie samosas. Is it Chinese food, is it Indian? It's both. And the only thing you'll care about is how to get more into your mouth. Head to Northeast for a truly unique dine in or take out experience.
www.chindiancafe.com

Jakeeno's — 35%

I have a special place in my heart for neighborhood pizza joints. Where else can you get a simple yet satisfying slice or five and chew the fat with a few friends after a long day at the office? Jakeeno's Pizza & Pasta is a classic Powderhorn pizza parlor with everything deliciously old school you'd expect. If the weather's nice, order up some wings on the patio and relax. Or if it's a delivery kind of night, pick up a large cheeseburger pie with an order of wings, maybe a salad, and an order of artichoke dip and you're night is pretty well made.
www.jakeenos.com

Blue Door Pub — 25%

Burgers come and burgers go, but the burgers at Blue Door will always be among my all-time favorites. Frankly, nobody has come close to Blue Door's peanut-butter-and-bacon-laden Jiffy Burger and I strongly doubt anyone ever will. If that sounds too adventurous a combo, fear not. The menu is chock full of fabulous beefy options. Their signature cheese-stuffed Blucys are the stuff of burger legend. And because you're already in a festive mood, make room for the nacho totchos and SPAM bites.
www.thebdp.com

Mojo Monkey Donuts — 20%

Start your Dining Out for Life day of meals with one of the best fresh-baked donuts in the Twin Cities, bar none. And, by "bar none," I mean you better grab hold of one (or a dozen) Maple Bar donuts topped with thick cut bacon. Yes, I said bacon. There is no better marriage of flavors than maple and bacon. Trust me. No matter your wanton donut desires, Mojo will have a hearty selection of uniquely delicious sweet treats. Fill up a box of cake, raised, cruller, danish, and other desires to share with coworkers or friends. You'll be employee/friend/partner of the month for, like, the whole year.
www.mojomonkey.biz

Ward 6 Food & Drink — 20%

If I'm in St. Paul, it's for a concert or, more likely, food. And just like Minneapolis' restaurant renaissance, St. Paul is now replete with its very own tempting tastescape. Hop over the river this year for a ridiculously soul-warming meal at the magical Ward 6. I first fell in love with this Payne Avenue establishment after inhaling the now mythical Fatty Melt, a burger stuffed between two grilled cheese sammies. Sadly, it's now a thing of lore, but Ward 6 always has a unique burger just waiting for you. The special beef-fat-fried fish and chips are thankfully still on the menu and worth every pant-expanding bite.
www.ward6stpaul.com

eagleBOLTbar — 100%

The eagle needs no explanation, but a reminder that, in addition to a stiff drink or four, you can also grab a super juicy burger basket with fries at this downtown watering hole. Perfect for your Dining Out for Life lunchtime nosh with coworkers or late-night nibble with friends.
www.eagleboltbar.com

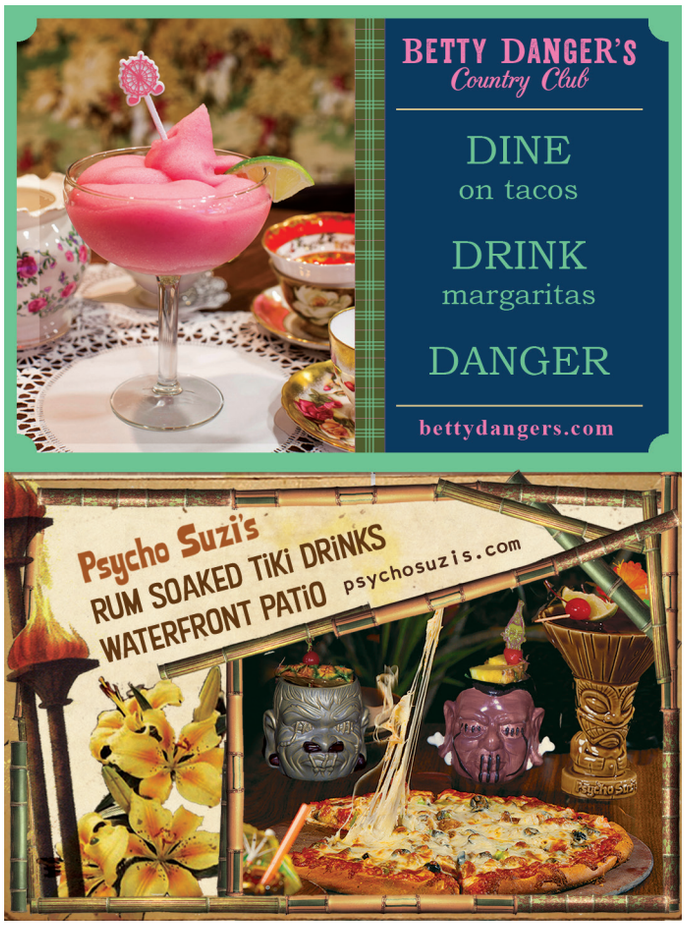
Sassy Spoon — 20%

You might think a self-described gluten-free restaurant would result in a culinary snooze fest. You would be wrong. Completely and utterly wrong. This swiftly-becoming-South-Minneapolis-staple is jam-packed with an impressively rich menu full of delicious bites that just happen to also come sans gluten. The flatbread pizza and turkey meatballs are a personal favorite, as is the cauliflower rice. For dessert, please avail yourself of the cookie dough.
www.sassyspoonmpls.com ■



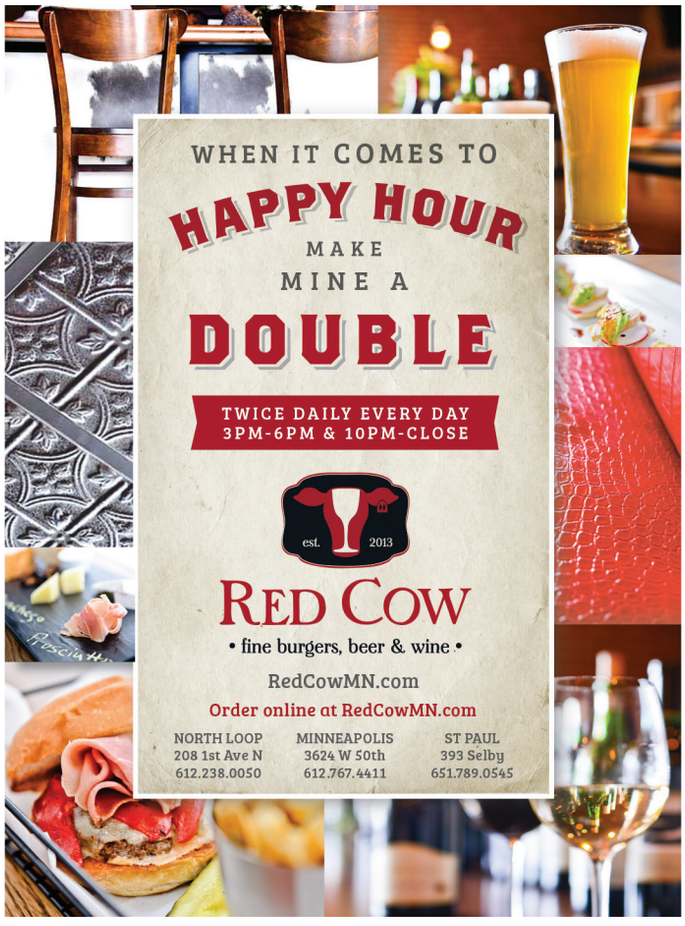
Sassy Spoon

Photo by Hubert Bonnet


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	L	D	The Lowbrow
B	L	🍸	The Lowry
	D		LUSH
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	L	D 🍸	Mason's Restaurant Barre ★
	L	D 🍸	Maverick's Wood Grill
	L	D	Meet Market - Stillwater
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	D		moto-i
B	L	D	Muffin Top Café
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B	L	D	The Nicollet Diner
	D		Pagoda
	D	🍸	Piccolo
	L	D 🍸	Pizza Lucé - Downtown Mpls (DINE IN ONLY)
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GOLD 25-34%

	L	D	Angelina's Kitchen
	L	D	Blue Door Longfellow
	L	D	Blue Door Pub
	L	D	Blue Door U
	L	D 🍸	Bluefox Indian Bar & Grill
	D	🍸	Brewer's Table
B	L	D	Butter Bakery Cafe
	L	D	Citizen Supper Club
B	L		Colossal Café
B	L		Colossal Café - Grand
B	L		Colossal Café - Minneapolis
	D	🍸	Common Roots Cafe
	D	🍸	Corner Table
	D	🍸	Curran's Restaurant
	L	D	Day Block Brewing Co.
	L	D	Eli's East Food & Cocktails
	D		Erté and The Peacock Lounge
	L	D 🍸	Foxy Falafel
	L	D	Great Waters Brewing Company
	L		Harriet's Inn
	D	🍸	The Hilltop
	D	🍸	joan's in the Park
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	L	D	Lyon's Pub
B	L	D 🍸	Marin Restaurant & Bar
B	L		May Day Café
	L	D	McCoy's Public House
	L	D 🍸	Mill Valley Kitchen
	D		Nightingale
	L	D	Northbound Smokehouse & Brewpub
	D	🍸	Pilgrimage Café
	L	D 🍸	Pizzeria Lola
	L	D	Q fanatic BBQ - Minneapolis
	D		The Rabbit Hole
	D	🍸	Rainbow Chinese Restaurant and Bar
	L	D 🍸	Revival
	D		Rinata
	D		Saffron Restaurant & Lounge
	L	D 🍸	Signature Café
	D		Sparks
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SILVER 20-24%

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	L	D 🍸	5-8 Grill & Tap
	L	D 🍸	5-8 Tavern & Grill
	L	D	Angelo's Italian Restaurant
B	L	D	Barbette
	D	🍸	Be'Wiched Deli
B	L		Black Dog Cafe
	L	D	Black Forest Inn
	D		Black Sheep Pizza - St. Paul
	L	D	Borough
	L	D	Boston's
	D		Bradstreet Craftshouse
B	L	D	Bruegger's Prairie Village
B	L	D	Bruegger's Westwind Plaza
B	L	D	Bryant Lake Bowl
	D		The Bulldog Downtown
	D		The Bulldog Lowertown
	D		The Bulldog Uptown
	D		Buona Sera Ristorante and Wine Bar
	L	D	Buster's on 28th
	D		The Butcher Block Restaurant
	D	🍸	Café Ena
B	L	D 🍸	Cafe Racer Kitchen
	D	🍸	Chilkoot Café and Cyclery
	D		Coup d'etat
	D		Craftsman Restaurant
	L	D 🍸	Crooners Lounge & Supper Club
	L	D	Dan Kelly's Pub
	L	D	The Draft Horse
B	L	D	Dunn Brothers Coffee - Linden Hills
	D		Eat Street Social
B	L	D	Elsie's Restaurant, Bar & Bowling Center
	L	D 🍸	Galactic Pizza
B	L	D	Gigi's Café
	L	D 🍸	Ginger Hop Restaurant & Bar
	D		GYST Fermentation Bar
	L	D	The Happy Gnome
B	L	D	Hard Times Café
B	L	D 🍸	Hell's Kitchen
	L	D 🍸	Kafé 421
	D		Kings Wine Bar
	D		Kyatchi
	D	🍸	La Fresca
	D		Lake & Irving
	D		Luna Rossa Trattoria & Wine Bar
	L	D	Manny's Tortas
	D		Midori's Floating World Café
B	L	D 🍸	Milton's V V B
B			Mojo Monkey Donuts
	L	D	Monello
	D		Nighthawks
	L	D 🍸	Nonna Rosa's Ristorante Italiano
	D		Northeast Social
	L	D 🍸	Ox Cart Ale House
B	L	D 🍸	Park Tavern
	L	D	Pat's Tap
	L	D	The Pourhouse
	D		PUB 819
	D		Rail Station Bar and Grill
	D	🍸	Red Cow - Minneapolis
	D	🍸	Red Cow - North Loop
	D	🍸	Red Cow - St. Paul
	L	D	Red Stag Supperclub
	L	D	Republic Seven Corners
	D	🍸	Rincón 38
	D	🍸	Roat Osha
B	L		Rustica Bakery
	D		Salut Bar Americain - St. Paul
	L	D 🍸	The Sample Room
	L	D 🍸	Sassy Spoon
	D		Sawatdee of Eden Prairie
	D		Stanley's Northeast Bar Room
B	L		Swede Hollow Cafe
	L	D	The Third Bird
B	L	D	Tiny Diner
	D	🍸	Tooties On Lowry
	D	🍸	Tum Rup Thai
	D		Victor's on Water
	L	🍸	W.A. Frost & Company
B	L	🍸	Ward 6 Food & Drink

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🍸 = Includes alcohol ★ = 50%+

2016 DRAG BRUNCH REVIEW

DRAG YOURSELF TO BRUNCH

BY SHANE LUECK

Sass. Check. Eyelashes. Check. Heels. Check. If you're in need of brunch with a side of lively entertainment, a drag brunch is the place for you. Where else are you able to enjoy your favorite menus (who doesn't love breakfast foods?!) and see your favorite queens do their thing, all in an atmosphere where it is socially acceptable to day drink? Any decent-sized city has at least one drag brunch, but with more and more Twin Cities eateries hopping on the drag queen brunch bandwagon (and not just gay bars, either!), there is truly a brunch scene for everyone. Whether waking up to hit brunch after a long night out on the town or bringing the family out for a nice meal, drag brunches across the metro are sure to entertain.

Gay 90's

www.gay90s.com

On the first Sunday of every month, all ages are welcome as reigning Miss Gay United States Brandonna Dupri LaReese hosts Eggs N Drag from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. LaReese takes credit as creating Minnesota's original drag brunch, going on three years now. Coming from the East Coast where they are a popular event, LaReese worked to create a family-friendly brunch (note: the drag acts are G-rated), even slotting time in the act for the children in the audience to get on stage and strut their stuff. Brunch-goers can partake in a $15 all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet (complete with an omelet station, and kids under 12 get in for just $7) and $10 bottomless mimosas, with a Bloody Mary bar soon to come.

LaReese says she is seeing the brunches having a positive effect on the community. "We get a lot of kids who come with families, who are already identifying themselves as a different gender," she says. "We are able to provide a safe atmosphere for people like that. Teenagers who are just starting to come out. I get to have conversations with these kids and families and share things I went through as a kid."

Aside from LaReese and her "right-hand girl" Bad Karma, the cast at the Gay 90's rotates with different girls featured. Regardless of who is performing that day, LaReese promises you'll have a good time. No matter why you are brunching, LaReese says it's all about you. "We do games, we bring out bachelorettes and bachelors; we do free shots for them on stage and they tell us where they met, and all that," she says. "They make us, without them we would just be queens performing to empty chairs."

Union Rooftop

www.facebook.com/flipphone

Born out of a desire to create a Dolly Parton Flip Phone event that Chad Kampe didn't think would be a best fit for a night event, Flip Phone's drag brunches are a hit, with reservations usually selling out within 24 hours. Without a set schedule, Flip Phone's brunches are set each month based on Union's schedule, though they usually happen on Saturdays. The best way to find out about the next brunch is to follow Flip Phone on Facebook.

"Guests attending our events expect a party, and we bring it!" Kampe says. "The retractable roof at Union is what really makes our events special. We have the opportunity to do our drag brunches with the roof off and under the sun. Who wants to sit in a dark room on a beautiful day? If the weather is cruddy, you have the opportunity to sit under the glass and feel like you're outside. All of our events feel like a party and usually end with guests getting up and dancing."

The party brunches are always set around a theme. Past brunches include Beyoncé, Britney Spears, Disney, and Dolly Parton, with more exciting themes to come. With the variety in themes, comes a variety of queens from across the drag community. "They enjoy coming back to our events because our audience is always thrilled for their performances," Kampe says. "Many of the queens we work with also perform at Flip Phone dance parties. They all slay it! I say doing drag before nightfall is a gift from the gods! Our past queens include Sasha Cassadine, Kamaree Williams, Julia Starr, Phaedra Simone, Sasha Carter Richards, Jamie Monroe, Belize Rodgers, Kelondra Rodgers, Alexis Beamer, and Nickita Kyle."

Kampe also partners with OutFront Minnesota to raise money during each event. So far in 2016, he says they've raised over $5,000 for the organization during these brunches.

Hell's Kitchen

www.hellskitcheninc.com

Local favorite Hell's Kitchen has always been known for their unique entertainment offerings and their relentless support for the community. According to Nina DiAngelo, they have been wanting to try a drag brunch for a while and approached her to make it happen.

Every third Sunday of the month, DiAngelo is sure to put quality above all else. Starting with the food. Hell's Kitchen is consistently described as offering some of the best recipes in the city. The brunch menu is stacked with standard brunch favorites, as well as many of Hell's Kitchen's signature items. And of course, DiAngelo's drag brunch features the infamous Bloody Mary bar, which is actually a 35-foot hallway where you can cre-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



From left: Kamaree Williams, Phaedra Simone, Belize Rodgers. Photo by Andy Lien



From left: Kamaree Williams, Phaedra Simone, Belize Rodgers. Photo by Andy Lien

Union Rooftop

ate some of the most insane Bloody combinations ever seen (only $12.95 during the drag brunch).

That level of quality is also maintained in the entertainment. Other than DiAngelo, local favorites/legends Roxy Marquis, CeeCee Russell, and Bebe Zahara Benet are mainstays in the cast. "Always the best of the best," DiAngelo says. "Our show is heavily produced, and we offer some of the most seamless celebrity impersonations that the midwest has to offer. Also, we typically have an entertainer from out of town, just to ensure that when you come to our brunch you will always see something different."

The timing of the Hell's Kitchen brunch (3:00–5:00 p.m.) also sets them apart. You can sleep in and *still* see your share of fabulous drag accompanied with fabulous food. "Due to the overwhelming response we've received, there is a possibility that the brunches may become more frequent, but that is still in the conversation phase," DiAngelo says. "We sell out rather quickly, so it just depends on who gets online first to get tickets."

LUSH

www.lushmpls.com

If you ask Mistress Victoria DeVille, Lush's brunch and drag shows have always been extremely popular, so it only made sense to combine them. Now, every Sunday at noon, for the price of a $20 ticket, DeVille and the cast of #DragRevolution thrill audiences while you dine on an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet of the favorites off the Lush brunch menu. Bottomless mimosas can be added for $12. Keep your eyes open! DeVille says they frequently have special guests.

"We have some fabulous regulars, but also see new faces every week," DeVille says. "Our drag brunches feature the most performers in town."

Each week has a different themed show. The first week of every month is Pajama Party Drag Bunch and the last Sunday of each month is themed for all ages (a G-rated, kid-friendly drag brunch). Popular themes in the past have included country western, gospel, divas, disco, and more! ■

Hell's Kitchen



Top row: Nina DiAngelo as Barbra Streisand, BeBe Zahara Benet as Donna Summer, Roxy Marquis as Dolly Parton. Middle row: Nina DiAngelo as Bette Midler, Nina DiAngeo as Pink, BeBe Zahara Benet as Whitney Houston. Bottom row: BeBe Zahara Benet as Diana Ross, Roxy Marquis as Amy Winehouse, Roxy Marquis as Madonna. Photos by Jim Wilson



Mistress Victoria DeVille. Photo courtesy of Mistress Victoria DeVille

Lush

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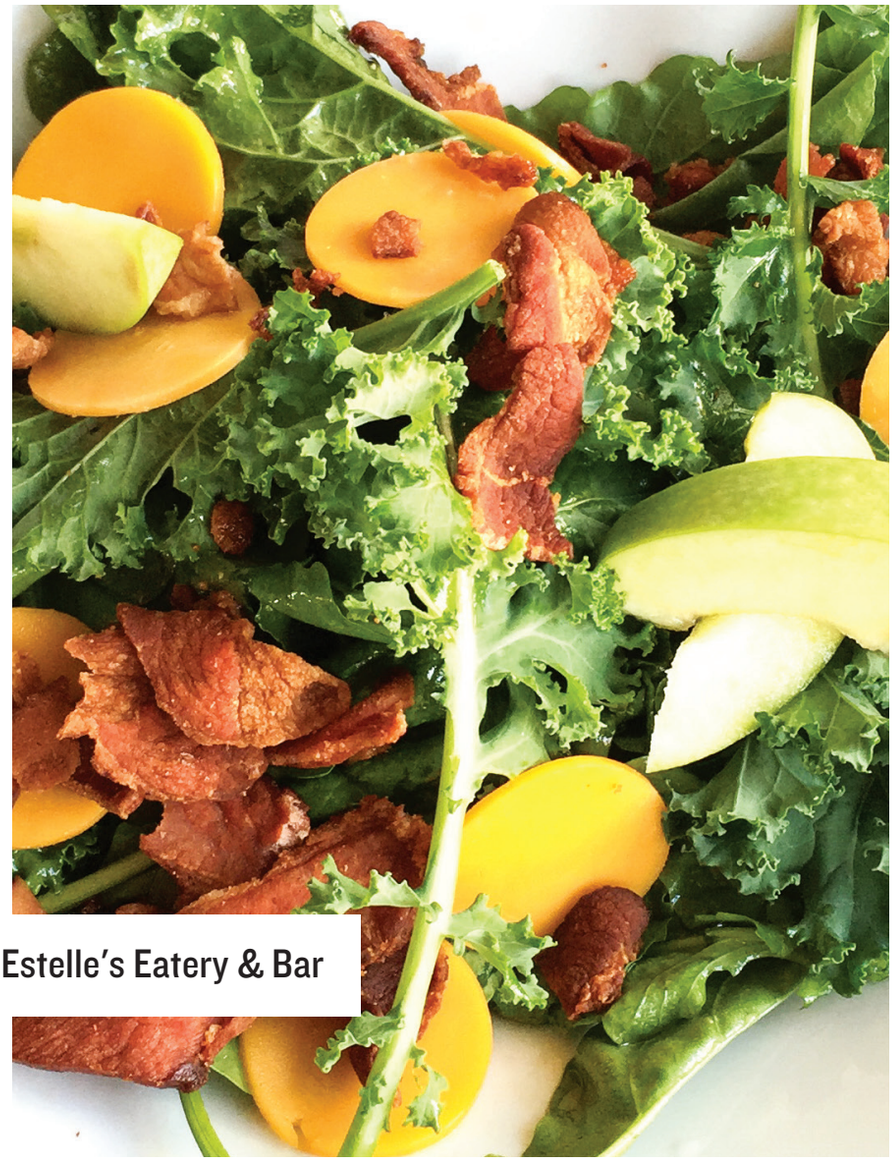
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New Not-to-Miss Restaurants

BY ANDY LIEN | PHOTOS BY ANDY LIEN

Lavender comes out with a new issue every two weeks, each one covering a new restaurant or food and drinking topic in some way, shape, or form. In a place like the Twin Cities, a hotbed of culinary delight, we do our best to keep up. To that end, I want to shine the light on a few of the places that have opened recently that you should know about and what I find to be enchanting about each of them.



Estelle's Eatery & Bar

The Commodore Bar & Restaurant



Cathedral Hill Gem:

The Commodore Bar & Restaurant

St. Paul
www.thecommodorebar.com

Brought to us by the same group that has W.A. Frost and Company, the University Club of Saint Paul, the Saint Paul Athletic Club, and Stout's Island Lodge, Commonwealth Properties has gifted us with a gleaming gem: The Commodore Bar & Restaurant. The Commodore opened as a hotel in 1920 and is now condominiums. Though the space for the restaurant and bar had been used for private events over the years, the recent overhaul of the art deco bar and restaurant seating in its first floor has brought it back to life for the public. Hailing a time when F. Scott Fitzgerald lived within its walls and bootlegging was a thing, the drinks are made with Gatsby in mind and the spirits all come from within "bootlegging distance," so, they're local. I recommend gussying up and getting reservations for the dining room, or bellying up to the bar for the Commodore Burger with gruyere and fries.

Day Trip Delight:

Estelle's Eatery & Bar

Harmony, Minnesota
www.facebook.com/estelleseatery

A day trip that tends to be common among *Lavender* readers is a jaunt down toward Lanesboro. Or, some make a weekender out of it, hitting the Root River Trail, some antique shops, as well as one of the many gay-owned bed and breakfasts in the area — something that I recommend highly, as do I recommend going a little further south to Harmony, for Estelle's. In a small town that's known for having the biggest Amish community in Minnesota, there is this new eatery (opened in July 2015)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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that won me over in moments. The decor is both light and rustic, the people are friendly, and the food is superb. I'd heard that the duo behind the restaurant, Matt Brown and Heidi Harstad, had experience at Travail, Pig Ate My Pizza, the Rookery, and Haute Dish, so to say that the squash soup that changed my life started as a bowl of food bits and a puff of cotton candy that was dissolved by the soup as it was poured over it is neither a surprise nor an oddity. That it tasted so good was downright staggering, though. The sandwiches, salads, and desserts we devoured all had the same effect on us: they made us smile and wish for more...as did learning from our server, a lifetime friend of Heidi's, that the restaurant is named for Brown and Harstad's infant daughter. A delight of a place.

Blue Ribbon Reno:

Handsome Hog

St. Paul

www.handsomehog.com

One of the most impressive renovations in recent history is this newcomer to Mears Park in St. Paul, Handsome Hog. What had been Bin Wine Bar, a not-unattractive space itself, has been completely redone to become a sophisticated, savvy setting for a contemporary Southern restaurant. While I'm handing out blue ribbons for design, let me also say that it's "Some Pig" that Chef Justin Sutherland's putting out. Open for lunch, dinner, and late-night noshes, the Handsome Hog has all the bases covered from cocktails to charcuterie to entrées to dessert. My non-hog personal favorites included the Chicken N Waffles (rosemary and pear-infused waffles, buttermilk fried chicken, honey cayenne butter, and bourbon maple syrup), Hushpuppies (made with crawfish, roasted corn, and smoked green tomato relish), the Beef Short Rib (with potato wedges, mustard greens, smoked trumpet mushrooms, and pickled watermelon rind) and a decadent dessert of Smoked Peaches & Cream (vanilla cremeux, grilled peaches, smoked candied almonds, peach ice cream, and smoked almond milk). And that



I can hit it up before or after a Saints game via the Green Line LRT is only a bonus. It's a renovation for not only that space, but for the food scene over at Mears Park.

Neighborhood Newbie:

Heirloom

St. Paul

www.heirloomstpaul.com

The Merriam Park neighborhood of St. Paul has been hankering for a place like Heirloom. Some have called it a restaurant desert, I'd just call it ripe for the planting. Living fairly close to this newcomer, I want to give a heart-felt welcome to the place that's dishing up what they call "modern farmhouse cuisine." Chef Wyatt Marsh is taking what is seasonal and both serving and saving it; giving us what's fresh in spring and summer as well as preserving it for fall and winter. I like the concept, I like the execution. The service has been earnest, the space is inviting and I'm looking forward to my brunch reservations there this weekend. For supper, I'll tell you that while I ate my way through a fair portion of the menu, my short list includes the must-have Parsnip Custard (with pearl onions and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



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mushroom and parsnip chips), the Ricotta Gnocchi (with N'duja sausage, bitter greens, and duck egg), the Pork Jowl (with sweet potato puree, sour cabbage, and cranberry) and the Carrot Cake.

Retro Import:

Hi-Lo Diner

Minneapolis
www.hi-lo-diner.com

The newest Pennsylvania import to Minnesota is the 1957 Fodero diner on Lake Street, called the Hi-Lo Diner. I was able to buzz in there on their second day of business and taste for myself what they've got going on in that sleek, silver fox of a restaurant. Be sure to order one of their boozy shakes or other cocktails and then settle in for their signature Hi-Tops: fried dough with your choice of toppings. What's basically a donut disc becomes a vehicle for their cheeky and tasty interpretations of pop-culture nods like the Gary Coop-er (topped with buttermilk fried chicken, maple-bourbon syrup, country gravy, and micro arugula) and the Kim Jong Yum (topped with braised Korean short rib, simple glaze, apple-bacon slaw, and wasabi micro-greens), which will be my go-to Hi-Top. Be sure to also try The Commercial (a white cheddar biscuit smothered with prime rib, beef gravy, whipped potatoes, horseradish cream sauce, and scallions) and the Crispy Chicken Sandwich (with apple-bacon slaw, Hi-Lo pickles, and garlic aioli). Brought to us by James Brown and Mike Smith of Forage Modern Workshop and Brownsmith Restoration, along with Pat McDonough and Jeremy Woerner of The Blue Door Pub(s), I have no doubt that this Hi-Lo venture will also succeed.

Comfort Food Memory:

Mucci's Italian

St. Paul
www.muccisitalian.com

There was a time when I'd drive down Randolph Avenue in St. Paul to get to a former favorite called the Mildred Pierce Cafe. Time passed, the restaurant didn't make it, and it became a fond memory. Today, thanks to the opening of Mucci's Italian, I can make

Hi-Lo Diner







Mucci's Italian



St. Genevieve

the same trip and end up with a new and improved destination with its own food memories, brought to us by way of Tim Niver and Chef Chris Uhrich. Niver also owns The Strip Club Meat & Fish as well as Saint Dinette, and this new venture will undoubtedly be as successful, if the lines at opening are to be any indication (they don't take reservations so arrive for opening or prepare to wait...and it's so very worth it). Listen carefully to the daily specials (the pasta with lamb meatballs, wild mushrooms and kalamata olives was lip-smackingly good), but be keen on what's laid out before you in the menu. The deep-fried pizza dough delivers savory flavors (trust me that the Kenzie Jo with crème fraîche, pears, pecans, pancetta, mozzarella, and red wine reduction is even better the next day) and the Brussels sprouts are killer. Get the Tiramisu. It looks like a slab from your grandma's 9 x 13 aluminum pan, and it could very well be, if your grandma could make Tiramisu this good. Mucci's is comfort food at its finest.

Joie de Vivre:

St. Genevieve

Minneapolis

www.facebook.com/stgenevieve

South Minneapolis has gained another fine restaurant by Steven Brown of Tilia; this time, the former Lynn on Bryant space has been transformed into a welcoming French oasis, St. Genevieve. When I arrived on an unseasonably warm spring day, I was seated in the sun next to an open window, happy to be basking. I could have sat there for hours. Wait. I did sit there for hours. The sun went down, the floor-to-ceiling windows were closed, the ambiance changed to be more lively as the volume went up, contained by the walls and windows. The menu offered up a number of options; my favorites were the small plate of Leeks (braised and topped with truffle vinaigrette, speck, and parmesan), the Ribeye Tartine (with grilled ramps and wheatberry), the Pork Tenderloin (with cheese grits, celeraic remoulade, onion puff, and pork belly), and my first rhubarb of the season on a Crème Fraîche Panna Cotta (with cardamom shortbread). Sparkling drinks flow, the staff is convivial and I drank in the joie de vivre. What more could I want? Je ne sais pas. ■

TRAVEL | BY CARLA WALDEMAR | PHOTOS BY CARLA WALDEMAR



Mexican Street Food at La Gloria.

San Antonio…Sun Antonio!

Forget the calendar's promise of spring. We in Minnesota don't fall for that illusion. If we're smart, we're off to San Antonio. The message "Remember the Alamo" takes on new meaning when it's 75 degrees at the site and still muddy in Minnesota. The sky behind the city's icon is an impossible shade of blue, so trade your boots for sandals, and hit the road!

San Antonio's laid-back vibe is more Mexican than King Ranch, starting with its trademark River Walk, extending 13 miles (with more to come) — the lifeline of the city. The rio slithers between balmy promenades sheltered by palms and cypresses, roses and ivy tumbling over waterfalls, mosaics and fanciful bridges — a pastoral meander girdling the downtown loop's livelier color guard of bars (margaritas to go), bistros, and retail. Jump off at Houston Street and into a slice of Texas history, starting, as it all did, at The Alamo.

The white limestone church-cum-fort of 1724 is best remembered for the battle of 1836, when Texans, outnumbered ten to one by the Mexican troops of General Santa Anna, were defeated and slain. Tour (it's free) the tiny church-fort and barracks to view hallowed battle icons like the wallet and firearm of David Crockett, killed here after the brave 13-day siege, and Santa Anna's sword.

Follow Houston Street to San Fernando Cathedral (the oldest in Texas) where the remains of Crockett, Jim Bowie, and James Travis are honored. Linger for a free sound-and-light show (Tues., Thurs-Sat. evenings) tracing Texas history through artful projections on the cathedral's facade, amid a viewers' chorus of "Ooooh!"

Just behind the cathedral sits the Spanish Governor's Palace, a fancy name for the eight-room adobe structure of 1722, when the land belonged to Spain. The hand-carved doors, detailing the conquistadors' story, open onto "the most beautiful building in San Antonio," according to the National Geographic Society.

And just behind it, follow the strains of mariachi music to Market Square, the Mexican Mercado, launched in 1820 by the Chili Queens selling their specialty. Today it extends for three riotous blocks of color, brightening a hundred-plus shops selling crafts, folk art, piñatas, and pottery, and cafés like legendary Mi Tierra, since 1943 serving Tex-Mex icons 24/7 and 365 days.

Sated with tamales, retrace your steps to the River Walk, which me-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42


noah wolf

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This monthly event by Quorum Young Professionals is a fun, fab, casual event for LGBTA folks in their 20's and 30's who who are starting, interested in starting, or growing their careers. The emphasis is on creating an energetic, vibrant atmosphere where valuable contacts can be made, ideas and opportunities can be shared, and community can be formed -- not your career credentials. Come build your networks, find little opportunities to learn and grow, and help strengthen our presence in the greater business community. Free to attend.

Q University! Session 5: Social Media-How to Avoid Risks and Protect Your Business

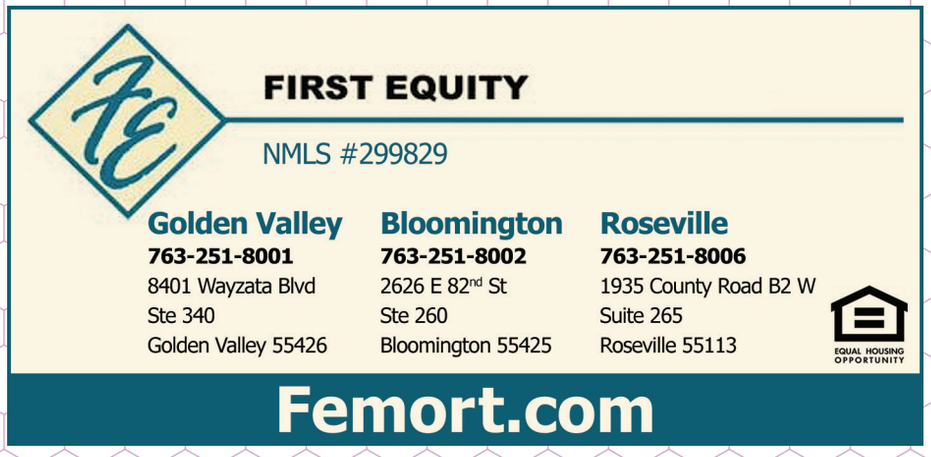
Tuesday, April 26 • 5:30-6:30pm
Sabathani Community Center • 310 E. 38th St., Room J, Minneapolis
Social media creates both great opportunity and great risk for businesses over the last decade. It can be a valuable tool for marketing, a resource for recruiters to identify and research candidates, and offers opportunities to promote company culture. However, use and misuse of social media can have legal consequences for businesses and employers of all sizes. This seminar will address legal pitfalls surrounding use of social media in marketing and in the workplace. Register at www.twincitiesquorum.com.

Quorum Leadership Awards

Thursday, May 12 • 5:30-9pm
Pinstripes • 3849 Gallagher Dr., Edina
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Mission San Jose, along the Mission Trail. Wooden bear, cement bull part of San Antonio Museum of Art's collection of Latin American art. The Alamo, in downtown San Antonio

anders close to the amazing Central Library, an eye-stopper in Enchilada Red stucco, housing, among the books, artworks such as the famous waving tendrils of a Chihuly glass sculpture. Across the street, the Southwest School of Art occupies the former Ursuline Academy, established in 1851 as the first school for girls in the city. The priest's house now is home to 50 looms, part of the weaving program; another building holds the ceramics studio, and the once-dormitory contains a small History Center. After a furtive glance, its docent whispered to me: "As long as we're here alone, I can say this: these nuns were feminists!"

Head south along the San Antonio River (drive or rent a bike) to explore the historic Mission Trail, recently designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Starting with The Alamo, Franciscan friars built missions a day's journey apart, aimed at converting the hunting-gathering Native Americans to Catholicism and farming life. It's smart to start with Mission San Jose, "the Queen of the Missions," which boasts a visitors center with a film introduction and free tours by the park rangers who run these sites.

We eavesdropped on Ranger Tom Castanos, educating grade-schoolers in indigenous ways. ("What did they wear? Well, go into your room, shut the door, and take off your clothes. Now you're like them, wearing nothing." Kids: "Eeeewww!") Tom trains them in throwing the javelin-like atlatl to hunt for dinner. We, meanwhile, admired the turmoil of sculpture surrounding the church's entrance: cherubs, crosses, and saints who told a story to those who couldn't read. The rose window is highly treasured, too. Continue to the others, such as Mission San Juan Capistrano, a blinding-white facade clasping a sweet, wood-beamed chapel with gleaming gilt altar.

Pursue history along the northern slice of the River Walk at the Witte Museum, whose focus is "unapologetically South Texas history," declared a docent as we ogled its collection of spurs, branding irons, and a climb-on saddle (selfie alert). Interactive exhibits trace "what it was like to settle South Texas" via the "voices" of a hotel maid or German miller. A pinball machine challenges you to "ride" the range, avoiding hazards ranging from hailstorms to stampeding cattle. Exhibits include a formidable longhorn and a portable jail and photos of those early Chili Queens, too.

The San Antonio Museum of Art, also on the River Walk, captures beauty worldwide, from Egyptian mummies, Indian Buddhas, and Roman emperors to contemporary paintings. But the don't-miss highlight is the Nelson Rockefeller collection of Latin American art this patron rescued and donated: mesmerizing works from the Mayans of 800 B.C. to a 1996 Brazilian print titled "St. Peter Receiving a Prostitute into Heaven." Works range from Diego Rivera's paintings to a life-size cement bull.

Nearby, The Pearl district represents a much more recent save: the rehab of an abandoned industrial area into the hippest enclave in the city, anchored by the repurposed Pearl Brewery debuting as the glam Hotel Emma. Mammoth brewing tanks marshal the happening bar, abetted by an in-house library, open-air swimming pool, and a swell café called Supper. It's helmed by Chef John Brand, a Midwest transplant who lives by the credo of "simple food, done well. Quality rather than 'hero' dishes," he explains, devoting half his menu to veggies. "Vegetables are the new meat," John declares, demonstrating with a lemon-dill risotto; Honeycrisp apple-parsnip soup; salt-and-vinegar Brussels sprouts and, oh yes, smoked quail, venison loin, and roast chicken. His breakfast bonanza includes chorizo Scotch egg with green chili cornbread, and spiced waffle loaded with duck confit.

Southerleigh, its in-house ally, crafts 14 beers (including the saison-style Don't Call Me Nancy) to salute a menu of coastal Texas comfort food: think jalapeño-cheddar grits, Gulf crab mac and cheese, fried snapper throats (far better than they sound), shrimp boil, and pecan pie. The Pearl enclave boasts 15 restaurants, from La Gloria, a shrine to Mexican street food, to Bakery Lorraine, for breakfast treats and elegant macarons, to Cured, famed for pork-cheek poutine, ham hocks with hominy, cured foie gras, and flatiron steak. Plus Texas barbecue and homemade sides at a dive divine called Augie's, a 15-minute hike away.

What gives, with all this primo kitchen talent? Well, blame it on the CIA. The Culinary Institute of America was lured to launch a branch of its famed chefs' school in The Pearl, highlighting Latin American cuisine. Its student-run restaurant, Nao, tweaks classics from Peruvian ceviche to Cuban sandwiches and Mexican flan, with possibly the best guac on the planet. There's also a weekend farmers market on the plaza, hemmed with dozens of retail boutiques (books to boots to bikes).

To plan your own escape, visit www.visitsanantonio.com; 800-447-3372. ■

ENDNOTE: Where the Boys Are

BARS: Bonham Exchange, festive hangout in historic site; Pegasus, lively hot spot with karaoke, drag; Sparky's Pub, bustling café and wine bar
HOOD: North St. Mary's Strip **PRIDE:** "Bigger than Texas" on July 2, 2016 at Crockett Park

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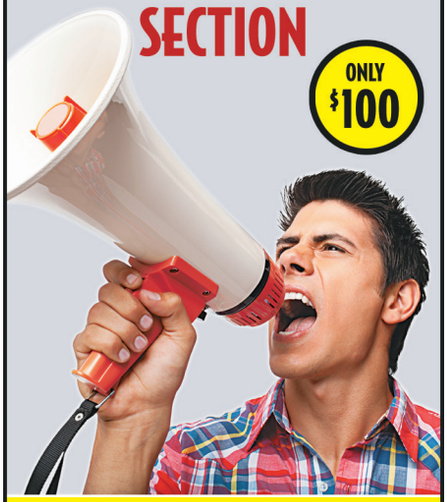
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LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

Black Guard Celebrates 39th Anniversary

The Black Guard of Minneapolis, the second-oldest leather club in the Twin Cities, celebrated their 39th anniversary on Saturday evening, March 26, 2016, at The Saloon. Among the people attending the celebration were representatives of the Imperial Court of Minnesota and the North Star Gay Rodeo Association.

During the time the Black Guard has been in existence, other leather clubs have come and gone. Two examples: in the Twin Cities, Minnesota Storm Patrol disbanded in 2011; and in St. Louis, Gateway MC shut down in 2013 after 40 years of existence.

The Black Guard has not disbanded, but for some time their membership has been dwindling.

For many years the Black Guard raised large amounts of money for charity. Their annual Black Frost run attracted leatherfolk from all over the U.S. and even from Europe, and always featured a very entertaining and creative show. In 2000, the club's show, presented at the Mall of America, was a production of the off-Broadway musical *When Pigs Fly*.

Club membership peaked in 1993, with 24 members. That was the year I started getting involved with the leather community, and I became friends with quite a few members of the Black Guard. Sadly, many of the people I met in 1993 are no longer with us.

With the recent passing of founding member Ralph Schmidt, the club is down to four full members, plus associate members and alumni. Aging, health problems, relocations, deaths from AIDS and other causes, and the rise of the internet all have played a part in the club's membership decline.

Even many of the places the Guard congregated are no longer here. St. Paul's Rumors/Innuendo bar, the site of the 2009 Black Frost show, was a victim of light-rail construction and closed in 2010. The Ramada Inn at 12th Street and First Ave., which the Black Guard used several times as a host hotel for their Black Frost run, is now a parking lot.

Holding another Black Frost run is out of the question at this point, but the club's remaining members still travel together to runs held by other leather clubs.

The club still hosts the occasional charitable fundraising event. As Black Guard member Michael Delorme said, "We're still here to serve the community." During the anniversary celebration the club donated checks to two charities: the Rural AIDS Action Network and the Seville Fund at Youthlink, a scholarship program to help homeless or otherwise disadvantaged GLBT youth afford college.





Black Guard members Thomas Weiland, left and Michael Delorme, right, display the Black Guard 39th-anniversary cake. Photo courtesy of the Black Guard; **The Black Guard in earlier times: the close of the Black Frost run show in 2009, held at Rumors/Innuendo in St. Paul.** Photo by Steve Lenius.

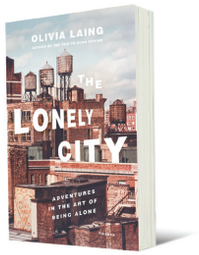
And the remaining members still take care of each other. During Schmidt's final years he was taken care of in large part by his club brothers because, as Delorme told me, "That's what brothers are for. If you don't do that, you're not really a brother."

Might the club experience a revival? It wouldn't be unheard of; the Knights of Leather, a Twin Cities club for leatherwomen that was founded in 1985, almost disappeared in the late 1990s before reinventing itself as a pansexual club that is now going strong.

For now, the Black Guard soldiers on. Delorme told me plans are being made for the commemoration of the Black Guard's 40th anniversary next year. I expect I'll be there. ■

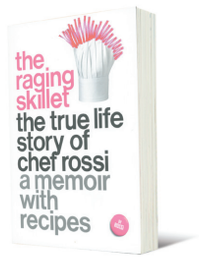
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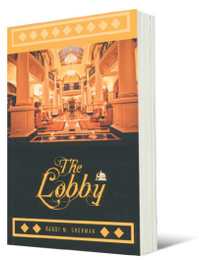
The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone
Olivia Laing
Picador
$26

Author of the highly acclaimed *The Trip to Echo Spring: On Writers and Drinking*, Laing now plumbs the depths of personal isolation in Lonely City. She had moved to Manhattan in the expectation of taking up a new relationship, expecting the attendant closeness and companionship. When her hopes were dashed, Laing used the lens of her own life in the city to view how other artists incorporated their own isolation and loneliness into their own iconic works. While many artists are mentioned, including the unique German countertenor Klaus Nomi (né Sperber), Laing focuses particularly on the trajectories of artists Edward Hopper, Andy Warhol, Henry Darger, and David Wojnarowicz. Alone. We've all been there, for loneliness is, Laing notes, "a populated place: a city in itself."



The Raging Skillet: The True Life Story of Chef Rossi
Chef Rossi
The Feminist Press at CUNY
$15.95

This "memoir with recipes" takes Rossi from her "orthodox light" beginnings in New Jersey, her extended rebellious years, apprenticeships in kitchens on land and riverboat, to her epiphany as Chef Rossi. Having reigned for the past 23 years as the catering director, owner and executive chef of The Raging Skillet, she now shares her battles against constraints: religious, familial, and gender bias, crediting her mother's harrowing microwave cooking as incentive to escape to freedom and fame. Disseminated throughout are must-try recipes; her debut at 14 with "Rossi's Teenage Pizza Bagels" and "Snickers and Potato Chip Casserole" to the mature "Swordfish Skewers that Vanilla Ice Wouldn't Eat" and "Mango Ginger Sauce for Not Quite the End of the World," all served up in Rossi's piquant prose.



The Lobby
Randi M. Sherman
Friesen Press
$15.99 / $7.99 e-book

Grand hotels are unique ecosystems steeped in elaborate political hierarchies and byzantine protocols to rival Versailles's etiquette in its heyday. Sherman has created the Shipley, a San Francisco composite, in which to interweave some 50 story threads over a 24-hour period. Sherman herself has worked as a stand-up comedienne, which serves her well to convey the humor and pathos of the hopes and dreams — some vain, some heart-rending, some hopeless — of not only the passing flow of characters, but of the permanent denizens of the Shipley, the staff and, for the past 15 years, Oscar Pasternak, an aging retired actor, celebrated fixture in the Shipley lobby. Witty, brisk and affecting, *The Lobby* makes a good read; you'll undoubtedly recognize many of the players.



Living in the Chelsea Hotel
Linda Troeller
Schiffer Publishing Ltd.
$34.99

For 125 years they came to this building that was a hotel yet more; as Troeller quotes fashion designer Zac Posen, "It's a sanctuary, a brothel, and a home." Built in 1883, an apartment complex with ten floors and some 400 rooms, it went under in 1902, emerged as a hotel in 1905, continuing until it was bought and closed in 2011. It opens again this year. Award-winning photographer and writer Troeller knows her subject. She lived there 20 years, photographing, schmoozing, absorbing. Woody Allen filmed there, Arthur C. Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey* there, Robin Williams, Jackie O., Arthur Miller, and Andy Warhol (*Chelsea Girls*) were all familiars. Historic images, Troeller's photographs, and absorbing text make this book a valuable and entertaining read. ■



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RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2015 Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution







All good things must come to an end.

It must have been a tough decision for Mitsubishi to end its run of Lancer Evolutions. They were the focal point of the brand, exuding the highest level of performance worthy of track day endeavors or several grueling rally stages. Though the world enjoyed these high-performance compact sedans, we Americans only caught the last three renditions of these legendary machines.

Each one was born to race. They were made to conquer any territory – from tarmac to dirt – with brute force from its all-wheel drive system and booming turbocharged engine. It also helped to have Hollywood champion these icons of hoons on the silver screen. The late Paul Walker of *The Fast and the Furious* series turned these Evos into something desirable to drive for a generation of fans.

In my work, I am surrounded by those who are fans of the Evo. Some of them became owners, including you; however, I have never experienced one behind the wheel. Always in the shotgun position, but never driving one. That changed last May at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, when I took a 2015 Evo MR into the surrounding community away from the track. It was quite the experience. Yet, it was not enough for me to truly understand the reasons why you love these cars.

So, I asked for another round, right here in our backyard. The last Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution – save for the limited production Final Edition – to be written about by anyone, anywhere.

It is time for one final ride.

The Lancer first arrived for the 2008 model year. It sported a design language that carried over through most of Mitsubishi as a way to distinguish itself from everyone else. It worked, though Mitsubishi had problems with maintaining its presence in this country. That affected sales of the compact Lancer; however, there was one particular model that drew the hardcore enthusiasts in: the Evolution X. Available from 2008, the Evo remained the main draw into Mitsubishi showrooms. It was a dream of those who want to tackle great feats of driving, a flight of fantasy to those who have never experienced its superb thrust and road holding.

If you strip the front clip, wheel/tire combination, body kit, and spoiler of the Evo, the Lancer is pretty ordinary. While it underwent some updates for 2016, the Lancer is pretty much a basic sedan with some minute flair to show off. By adding those other body bits, beefing up the seating, engine, transmission, suspension, brakes, and drive system, the Evo becomes the proverbial "wolf in sheep's clothing." Only the observant know what to look for in order to get out of its way.

An Evo was not meant to own a supercar's look. Nor does it have to be the sexiest-looking car in the world. It is meant to own the road, and the overall design is specifically crafted into such. Aggressive is the best way to describe the Evo. With the front clip, body extensions, tire/wheel package, and spoiler, it is a brash figure with more than enough swagger that it doesn't need an app to attract whomever comes into its field of vision.

Yet, it is that look that distinguishes itself from the others. Usually, the Evo has a huge wing in the rear. Our 2015 Evo MR tester only had a rear lip of a spoiler. Though the rest of the body speaks "Evo," the MR's lack of a large spoiler gives it a stealth look that truly befits its "wolf in sheep's clothing" image. Yet, its 18-inch BBS alloy wheels do give away the fact that this is indeed a competition-bred machine.

Normally, an Evo would offer its front seat occupants a pair of Recaro seats with race car comfort and support. The MR deletes these seats in favor of a more comfortable, conventionally designed pair of leather-upholstered chairs. They provide good support in the cushion, but the seatback offers lower side bolstering only. If you have a wider back, these seats will be fine. Rear seats are normal with the same leather upholstery, and it yields decent room for people six-feet tall and under. Trunk space is very limited, thanks to the lack of depth with the battery and windshield washer portal placed in-between it and the rear seats.

One does not expect the latest and greatest instrumentation technology or gizmos in an Evo. The dashboard is straightforward and business-like. Instrumentation is comprised of two big dials for the speedometer and tachometer, a TFT center screen for fuel, temperature, trip, and other readouts, and a simple center stack with the touchscreen audio system and climate controls. There are a few vital buttons on the center console, for the Super-All Wheel Drive (S-AWC) system and for the heated front seats. Only the gear lever remains as a prominent piece of the Evo's controls.

The steering wheel offers a leather-wrapped thick rim to grip on, along with redundant audio, cruise control, and Bluetooth telephone controls. Mitsubishi's audio system can play back CDs, SiriusXM, and HD Radio, along with Bluetooth, USB, and auxiliary jack connections to portable devices. Nine Rockford Fosgate speakers are fed through a 710-watt amplifier providing a choice of sound options to fill the cabin. You can get a navigation system as an option in the Evo.

All of these creature comforts are fine to keep you entertained inside of the Evo; yet, the most entertaining part of this car is what lies underneath its body. It starts with a 291-horsepower 2.0-liter turbocharged engine. This monster mill has the task of pulling 3,571 pounds of competition-bred machinery. It does so with brute force. The GSR and Final Edition models offer the driver a third pedal to row five forward gears in its well-matched manual transmission. Our MR tester came with a six-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48

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speed Twin Clutch Sportronic transmission. It will not be the smoothest "automatic" transmission around, but it certainly gets the job done in sending those 291 horses to all four wheels via the S-AWC system. In Normal, it works just fine. Flip the transmission into Sport and you might be looking for a motorsport venue to play in. The revs run higher, the noise is more pronounced and more engagement would be required with the paddle shifters on the steering column.

The noise being referred to is from the exhaust pipe. We often talk about vehicles being quiet or trying to, at least. You expect noise from an Evo. It is a constant reminder of what this car was intended to be – performance driven for competition. To be clear, you don't expect an Alfa Romeo, a Ferrari, or a Lamborghini to be quiet. Neither will a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution. In fact, some owners have gone further to make their Evos even louder.

If you dare, there is a Super Sport mode. This is the Evo's launch control system. What does it do? It simply quickens the start off the line. If you know what you're doing, then go ahead and try it. If not, please do not touch it.

You also do not expect an Evo to be soft and cuddly on the road. The suspension is firm and you feel everything – bumps, expansion joints, cracks, and all other road imperfections encountered every day. The trade off is near flat cornering and an aggressive steering system that is heavily weighted for the toughest of turns. Turning radius is fine, but wheel-to-road response is quick. Brembo provides the quickest and most powerful brakes this side of a Porsche. They stop extraordinarily short in both normal and panic situations.

In terms of fuel economy…well…it is not economical for a compact car. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the Evo MR was rated at 17 MPG in the city, 22 MPG on the highway. We averaged 16.1 MPG in our care. An Evo is not about fuel efficiency, it is about the absolute driving experience.

That is what separates the Lancer Evolution from everything else: the experience of driving one. You don't need lane keeping, forward collision mitigation, or any of the semi-autonomous active safety technology now permeating in today's automobiles. You just have to know how to drive. The Evo has a strong steering system to keep it between the lines and your right foot is your best mitigation to not crash into anyone or anything. Driving the Evo does not require a driver's training day on the track, but it certainly does help to become competent behind the wheel of this car. There is a lot of power being put down in a concentrated package.

If you are lucky to find a new 2015 Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution, then you might as well note these sticker prices. The base GSR manual transmission model starts at $34,495. Step up to the MR, and your base price jumps to $38,995. Our tester came with a sticker price of $41,805. However, if you are one of the lucky 1,600 owners of the Final Edition, the base price is only $37,995.

How do you say "good-bye" to an icon? This one ruled the rally circuit for decades, became a movie star, and became the dreams of many young enthusiasts that were inspired by Walker, Vin Diesel, Michele Rodriguez, and company. It has become a track day superstar, as well as a headache to local public safety departments.

The Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution is an icon in every sense of the word; yet, it can carry people along in a quick manner. Still, one does not drive an Evo for practical reasons. It is for those who want a bit more adrenaline in their lives. For those who seek track stardom on the street, there are only a few left to call your own. ■

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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Apples To Soap Nuts

My girlfriend wants to do an experiment where we say terrible things to an apple for a week.

The apple conversation popped up while we were walking home from a grammar school science fair, where her fifth grade son was presenting a project. I'm not sure what his experiment was exactly; however, it seemed to require the indiscriminate spraying of food colors on every kitchen surface.

One of the young scientists at the fair presented the apple project. It involved her spending a week shamelessly flattering one apple, and insulting another one. At the end of the week, the favored apple was red, ripe, and juicy. Its sad counterpart was pale and mealy.

"Let's insult an apple and see what happens," my girlfriend said.

"You force me to buy nothing but organic fruit and now you want me to be mean to it?" I asked. "You're a monster!"

This conversation took place right around our first anniversary. We first dated in 1990, but then took a short 25-year break before reconnecting last year.

A lot has changed in my life in the past year. I fell deeply in love, moved to the suburbs with my girlfriend and her kids, and started buying organic everything.

Before we reconnected, I had heard of organic foods, but I thought they were limited to fruits and vegetables. I had no idea there was such a thing as organic beans, popcorn, or tortilla chips. Turns out there is an organic version of just about every food, and they all are a million times more expensive than non-organic. But even though I don't understand the definition of organic (grown in fields of diamonds and harvested by angels?), I began buying it exclusively because of love!

If I hadn't been so blinded by love, I would have seen that this organic nonsense was a slippery soap that led directly to the laundry room. Sure enough, my detergents and bleaches were banished and replaced with something called "Soap Nuts," which come in a package featuring an illustration of a hippie in a yoga pose.

"He doesn't look like he's ever taken a bath in his life," I argued when first handed the package. "Why should I trust the cleaning power of his Soap Nuts?"

I can't even discuss what happened to the fabric softener sheets. It's too painful. Who doesn't love soft, static-free clothes? A monster, that's who!

Soon, my beloved bathroom products were under attack. I considered these bleach- and ammonia-based powerhouses more like friends than cleaning tools. Yet, I turned my back on them for love. Coward that I am, I couldn't even look directly at them as I dutifully boxed them up and carted them to our town's hazardous recycling center.

As we walked home from the science fair, in our clothes dulled to a milky gray by Soap Nuts, I decided I had finally reached my limit.

"I'm incapable of saying mean things to an apple," I said. "And I won't do it."

She studied me for a moment and then finally nodded her head.

"OK, I'm going to let you have this one," she said. "But, tomorrow, you're going to learn about just how dangerous your favorite coffee is. And then we'll replace it with some nice organic herbal tea."

I kicked a stone in frustration and entertained some dark thoughts about love. Stripping me of caffeine. She was playing a dangerous game.

I looked up menacingly, preparing to launch a full rebellion that would include the return of my full artillery of cleaning products. But there she was, smiling at me, and I knew I was defeated. Damn you, love!

"Fine. I'll start drinking tea," I conceded. "But I'm not being mean to an apple." ■

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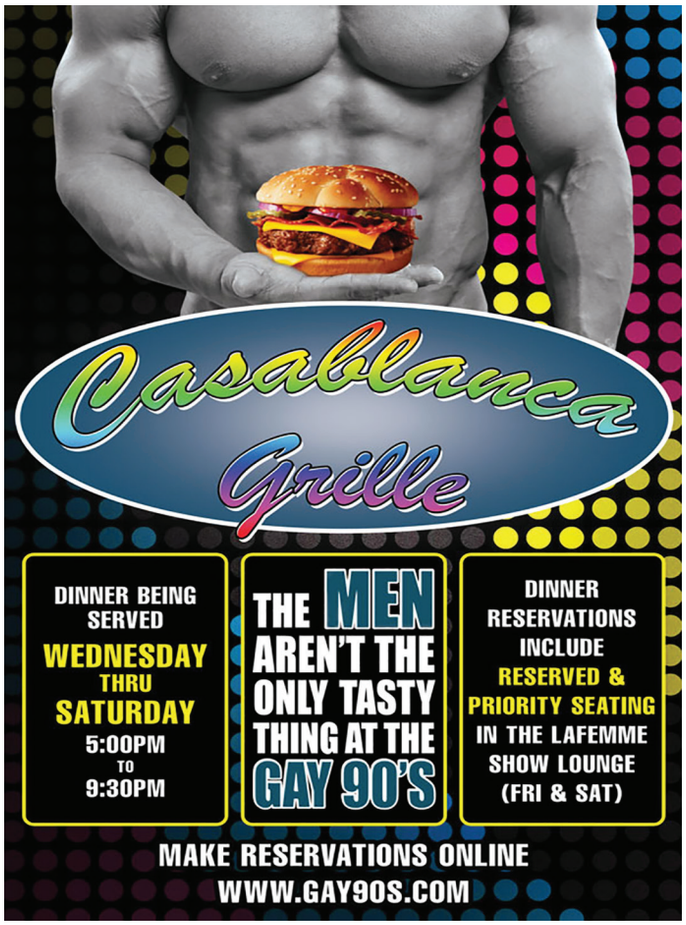


This one tattooed "Paris", and that one "London".
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SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Empowerment

Empowerment.

In the nonprofit world in which I work, "empowerment" is a truly positive word, maybe even a celebratory one, which means giving humans the confidence to advocate for themselves. You know, we nonprofit do-gooders live for that kind of stuff; teaching others how to fight their own battles makes us all warm and fuzzy.

Lately, however, I've been reminded of how "empowerment" has another meaning, one that's way more negative, even evil. This kind of "empowerment" is about giving someone license or a false sense of righteousness to do certain things — awful things — that people ordinarily wouldn't do. Sometimes, evil empowerment springs from the words or actions of a charismatic leader — oh, let me just pull out a random example like, say, Adolph Hitler. He went from being a deadbeat nobody to a real somebody, all because he empowered others to do things, like hate, incredibly well.

We know how that turned out.

Today, we're seeing in real time what it means to empower people (mainly older straight white men) to exclude, marginalize, and even punch, all in the name of "making America great."

From there, let me briefly pivot to my last column, "Bullseye," where I wrote about my personal angst over how transgender persons are being targeted by the government.

And what do you know? Not even a week after "Bullseye" went live, the North Carolina legislature introduced, debated, and passed HB2, an anti-LGBTQ bill, in the span of 12 hours. Immediately thereafter, Governor Pat McCrory signed the bill, thereby making it illegal for me to use any public women's restroom in North Carolina. The law also nullified a host of local laws that had been protecting all LGBTQ North Carolinians.

Way, way closer to home, on the very same day that Pat McCrory and his conservative friends were marginalizing Southern queer folk, a group of Minnesota legislators (which included 44 GOP state representatives) introduced not one, but two bills targeting trans persons in the workplace. These proposed laws would require that transgender employees only use workplace bathrooms that conform to a person's birth gender and not their "true" gender identity.

Really? Do these people actually want me showing up in the men's restroom? Did these narrow-minded legislators even think about how these laws, if enacted, could conceivably mean that bearded and muscled transgender men would be in the same locker room as the legislators' wives?

I'm learning that bigotry isn't always well thought out.

But I'm not here to retread old ground from my prior column. Rather, I have a theory: underlying all of these legislative actions is a form of evil empowerment. Because of these many bills and laws (I lost count at 16 states with 44 separate proposed pieces of legislation) the clear "official" message is that it's alright to single out trans people for special, second class, hateful treatment.

As a result, I predict that we'll see more and more instances of transgender persons being harassed.

Why?

Because the government is "officially" telling people it's okay to do that.

I know that in my limited world, known as "Planet Ellen," I've heard of an increasing number of trans friends and acquaintances being harassed within the past several weeks.

Take for instance the ugly encounter that my late thirty-something friend Cate had at a Minneapolis restaurant (not a bar, mind you) where a complete stranger, a man, approached her and the two married friends she was with. As Cate put it, "This dude starts asking pointed questions about what's in my pants. I push back a little, just asking him not to speak to me. He began to call me faggot, 'boi pussy,' and gaslighted (sic) me from that point forward, in an ugly way. I asked my companions to close out the tab and walk me home."

Or the instance where a 56-year-old trans woman, who had just worked out at her gym, boarded the light rail at Lake Street station. A group of five to seven male teenagers approached and asked where she had purchased her shoes. When she answered, the teens started to taunt and tease her. The trans woman then moved to another part of the train, but the teens followed and continued their harassment. Thankfully, other passengers intervened and sat with the trans woman until her stop (one person even escorted her home).

What makes these stories of harassment especially remarkable is that they involve middle-aged white transgender women. If you know anything about the trans community, you know these are the last people one would expect to be singled out.

It's true that I can't say that any of the above harassers specifically were aware of the many anti-transgender laws I've written about. Still, humans are really good at absorbing information. At the moment, there's a whole lot of "official" information out there stating that transgender persons aren't equal.

That, in my book, is how evil empowerment works. ■

Ellen (Ellie) Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change *(2013) and the architect of The C* Project, a new rural Midwest diversity/inclusion initiative (www.elliekrug.com/the-c-project). She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com.*





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AT-LARGE | BY JOHN MARK

Eating My Emotions / Restaurants To Feel Things

While quality of food is at the top of the list when it comes to our lasting restaurant impressions, the memories we make during our dining experiences can mean so much more. A meal is not the only thing shared at the dinner table. Stepping into a restaurant can trigger nostalgia both delicious and dark. In other words, your love for the flatbread pizza at Wilde Roast may likely be overshadowed in memory by your ex-boyfriend's decision to break up with you on the restaurant's patio. So, at the risk of over-romanticizing a bowl of soup, here are some of my favorite restaurants and the shadows of myself I left at their tables.

"I haven't slept in two days…" at Hard Times Café in Seward/West Bank. Trying to finish my undergrad in three years was no walk in the park. Hard Times' late night hours make it a destination for nocturnal college students. The huevos rancheros hit the spot when I thought I might die of sleep deprivation. With a notoriously angry kitchen staff, their blunt style of service is a humorous dichotomy to their sensitivity to vegetarian and vegan dietary needs. Upon my returns there, I always remember the feeling of running on fumes and the joy of breakfast at all hours. Bring your vegan friends to play checkers or stay up until 3:00 a.m. writing emails, Hard Times is there for you at all hours, despite the lack of service with a smile.

"He might break up with me…" at The Lowry in Uptown. I stared at my delicious steak salad, but couldn't take a bite. It looked beautiful with its ancho-rubbed meat, charred corn, tomato, red onion, queso fresco, avocado, tortilla, and creamy chipotle dressing, but it's hard to dig in when you're discussing a break up. I applaud the patient server, who made the best of her duty to awkwardly engage with two grief-stricken patrons. After an hour of drinking water, I took the salad to go and devoured it later that evening. As far as salads go, it was entirely delicious. I highly recommend it. For me, the Lowry is forever immortalized as a site of emotional turmoil, but for you…seriously, try the steak salad.

"I have an idea…" at Moose & Sadie's in North Loop. A favorite haunt for my creative collaborators, many ideas for photo shoots, videos, and events have been birthed at Moose & Sadie's. Most often occurring over coffee and a grilled cheddar and swiss cheese sandwich with Dijon mustard, I enjoy that the venue is primarily lit with natural light from its floor-to-celling length windows. Having played part to the origin of many of a production at its light wood tables, I often walk into Moose & Sadie's with an open heart and an enthusiasm for new ideas. Take your next lunch appointment there and it just may do the same for you.

"Imma be me…" at Moto-I Ramen & Sake House in Uptown. I like going out to eat alone. A personal happy place has been Moto-I. A Japanese spot at its finest, my favorite seat is at the bar, right in front of the television playing sumo-wrestling competitions. Filling up on ramen and answering to no one, dinner alone at Moto-I is a pursuit of what I love most: spicy food, global perspectives, and a lifestyle of independence. I highly recommend the steamed buns and pork ramen. Head there alone, fully experience the flavor, and indulge in the sight of big men touching tummies. ■

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